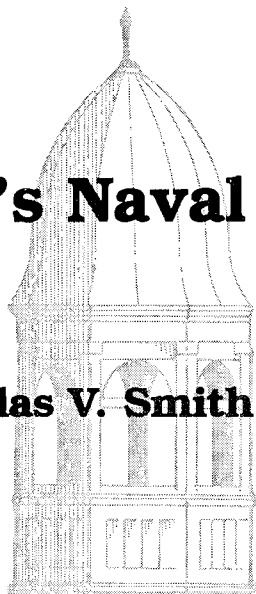


**An Occasional Paper of  
The Center for Naval  
Warfare Studies**

# **Russia's Naval Future**

**CDR Douglas V. Smith, U.S. Navy**



19941212 040

**Strategic Research Department  
Research Report 1-94**

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**U.S. Naval War College**



## REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved  
OMB No. 0704-0188

Joint reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302 and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188), Washington, DC 20503

1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)

2. REPORT DATE

24 MARCH 1994

3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED

FINAL - From 1993 to 1994

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE

RUSSIA'S NAVAL FUTURE

5. FUNDING NUMBERS

6. AUTHOR(S)

Commander DOUGLAS V. SMITH, USN

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)

US NAVAL WAR COLLEGE  
STRATEGIC RESEARCH DEPARTMENT (CODE 30)  
CENTER FOR NAVAL WARFARE STUDIES  
686 CUSHING ROAD  
NEWPORT, RI 02840-1207

8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION  
REPORT NUMBER

RESEARCH REPORT 1-94

9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)

US NAVAL WAR COLLEGE  
686 CUSHING ROAD  
NEWPORT, RI 02840-1207

10. SPONSORING/MONITORING  
AGENCY REPORT NUMBER

12a. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

APPROVED FOR PUBLIC RELEASE; DISTRIBUTION IS UNLIMITED

12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE

13. ABSTRACT (Maximum 200 words)

This report examines aims to explore the factors that, in combination, will determine the shape and strategic orientation of the Russian Navy at the turn of the century and beyond. Projections are offered on its likely composition and capabilities. The author concludes that, while it will remain largely confined to operations in the near ocean area, it will certainly meet the needs of the Russian Federation — at least for the next decade and perhaps longer — and should remain dominant in Eurasian waters.

14. SUBJECT TERMS

RUSSIAN NAVY; NAVAL FORCE STRUCTURE; RUSSIAN STRATEGY

15. NUMBER OF PAGES

60

16. PRICE CODE

17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF  
REPORT

UNCLASSIFIED

18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION  
OF THIS PAGE

UNCLASSIFIED

19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION  
OF ABSTRACT

UNCLASSIFIED

20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT

NONE

NSN 7540-01-280-5500

Standard Form 298 (Rev 2-89)

Prescribed by ANSI Std Z39-18  
298-102

UNITED STATES NAVAL WAR COLLEGE  
Newport, R.I.

**RUSSIA'S NAVAL FUTURE**

by

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This paper was prepared for the Strategic Research Department of the Center for Naval Warfare Studies.

The contents of this paper reflect the views of the author and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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24 March 1994

### RUSSIA'S NAVAL FUTURE

Russia is currently at a crossroads as she struggles to create a state identity which produces unique analytical challenges—particularly with respect to the formulation of projections. As the Russian Federation attempts to restructure, the abject condition of its economy has far-reaching implications for virtually every aspect of state life. Austerity is undoubtedly going to have a profound effect on the size and composition of the Russian Navy of the future. So also is the loss of construction facilities, bases, etc., in former Soviet Republics—not to mention competition for resources with the Army which now can be viewed as a much more fundamental part of state security than the Navy. Without question, the Russian Navy will evolve in the future into a very different sort of Navy than the one to which we have become accustomed during the Cold War.

This report aims to explore the factors that, in combination, will determine the shape and strategic orientation of the Russian Navy at the turn of the century and beyond. Projections are offered on its likely composition and capabilities. The author concludes that, while it will remain largely confined to operations in the near ocean area, it will certainly meet the needs of the Russian Federation—at least for the next decade and perhaps longer—and should remain dominant in Eurasian waters.



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**ABSTRACT**  
**RUSSIA'S NAVAL FUTURE**

As Russia moves toward the 21st century very real constraints exist on the size, shape, doctrine and operational focus of the future Russian Navy. This paper will discuss and consider such factors as historical trends established in the Tzarist navies and navalism under Communist rule as well as various factors which will combine to constrain the nature, shape and mission of the Russian Navy of the future. These constraints include the nature of the future Russian leadership; the irrevocability of decisions taken or thrust upon the Russian political leadership concerning the role and size of the Navy; threat perception; land focus; doctrine; competition for military resources; personnel problems; and implementation of arms control measures. The manner in which they are likely to interact, their range of potential impact and historical patterns that may reemerge will be examined to provide a basis for prediction of the likely size and mission focus of Russia's future Navy. It is not the purpose here to precisely define future Russian navalism.

Certain finite boundings will in all likelihood produce a circa 2000 Russian Navy of around 320 combatant ships with an average age of around 15 years. This Navy will lack global reach and will be constrained primarily to nuclear deterrence, protection of the nuclear arsenal at sea, protection of the approaches to the Russian littoral and SLOC protection in the Baltic and Black Seas.

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# RUSSIA'S NAVAL FUTURE

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## CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to examine the composition and utility of the Russian Navy as an instrument of state power at the turn of the century. At the outset it might be useful to consider what role naval forces will play in Russia's overall strategy. At one extreme are those analysts who maintain that Russia has just as great a need for a powerful navy as did the Soviet state. Dr. Aleksei Arbatov, Director of the Center for Arms Control and Strategic Stability for the Russian Federation, for example, argues that:

The Navy will become much more important for Russia than the Navy was in the past for the Soviet Union. Actually, the Navy always was a symbol of power and prestige for Russia. Only during the 70 years of Communism [was] the Navy degraded to the secondary role in the Soviet military. In the future the Navy will revive, and I think it will become much more important relative to the other Services.

Arbatov notes that there were 59 Ballistic Missile Submarines (SSBNs) in the inventory of the Commonwealth states, but that number should be reduced to between fifteen and twenty by the year 2000. As a result of recent arms reduction treaties, the percentage of Russian strategic nuclear assets based at sea would rise from 25-30 percent in the current year to around 60 percent by the turn of the century concurrently with the decrease in SSBNs. Consequently, Arbatov argues that protection of the sea-based deterrent will be a much more important mission. Arbatov also indicates that the Russian Navy would be important in maintaining sea lines of communications (SLOCs) for trade, which would be absolutely crucial for recovery of the Russian economy. He even suggests that naval power might provide leverage should Iran, Iraq or Moldova attempt to intervene in former Soviet Asian Republics.<sup>1</sup>

This paper challenges this view, for while Aleksei Arbatov's pronouncements on the importance of the Russian Navy in protec-

tion of sea-based nuclear assets—one of the last vestiges of Russia's pretension as a super power—are undoubtedly correct, his evaluation of its role in SLOC protection and creation of strategic leverage is not convincing. The Russian remnant of the Soviet Navy no longer has a true blue-water capability or global reach—if in fact it ever could accurately lay claim to having had one considering its lack of a forward basing structure—nor is it likely to have within the next two decades. Given current trends, such as scrapping of units which has already started, consolidation and/or elimination of shipyards and facilities, and most important the fragile and volatile state of the Russian economy, the outlook for the Russian Navy appears grim indeed. Interestingly, this conforms to the historical trends in the Russian Navy during periods of retrospection and introversion which usually followed military defeat and which were coupled with a near-term reduced perception of threat. Such periods were usually accompanied by an internal restructuring which was highly reliant on the incorporation of foreign technology and expertise and during which national economic and military improvements were of high priority. The Russian State that emerged was normally significantly more capable in both these areas. But the complexity of modern weapons systems and their associated cost would indicate that, even if historical patterns hold in modern Russia, the likelihood of a military resurgence in general and a naval resurgence in particular is extremely low—particularly in the foreseeable future.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In writing this study, I owe a great deal of thanks to several individuals who were most helpful in providing their valuable time for me to conduct personal interviews with them, as well as providing extensive source material of both a classified and unclassified nature. Listing them in the order in which they were interviewed, these include Captain Ed Smith of the Office of Naval Intelligence at the Pentagon; Dr. Ferd Neider of the Center for Naval Analyses; Dr. Floyd D. "Ken" Kennedy, Jr., also of the Center for Naval Analyses; Lieutenant Commander Dan Gallagher, Team Chief, Navy Team, Russia Section, General Purpose Forces Branch, Russia/Eurasia Division at the Defense Intelligence Agency; Dr. Eugene P. Sullivan of the Office of Slavic and Eurasian Analysis at the Central Intelligence Agency; Mr. Don Ross of the Naval Maritime Intelligence Center (now

Office of Naval Intelligence) at Suitland, Maryland; and Captain Serge Yonov, who recently completed a tour as U.S. Naval Attache to the Soviet Union/Russian Federation. Others who have assisted me in my research are too numerous to name. Since members of "intelligence agencies" reject attribution to themselves and the agencies they represent, primarily to prevent inadvertent disclosure of the methodologies they employ, all references to the representatives of the Office of Naval Intelligence, Defense Intelligence Agency, Central Intelligence Agency or Naval Maritime Intelligence Center will be listed as "Intelligence Sources" unless specific authorization for attribution has been given. While the insights of all those listed above are gratefully appreciated, I take full responsibility for all analytical content.

### CONTENDING WITH DIFFERENT APPROACHES

While not attempting to divulge methodologies, it may be useful to characterize the factors considered most important and institutional emphases evident in the ways in which these agencies view the Russian naval equation. In general, agencies incorporating the word "Navy" or "Naval" in their title are quite sensitive to the degree to which the Russian Navy exhibits vitality and robustness.

The Defense Intelligence Agency, I became quickly aware, tends to stress the land component of Russia's immediate threat perception—particularly as she deals with other member Republics of the former Soviet Union. In competition for increasingly scarce resources, this land focus is seen as dominant when compared to naval restructuring. Thus a bounding of sorts can be established with respect to the probable capability and utility of the future Russian Navy based on likely resource allocation. The Central Intelligence Agency, on the other hand, appears to focus primarily on the economic aspects of the equation, especially as they relate to the Russian requirement to restructure their economy. Of all the approaches this seems the most pragmatic as it centers on the art of the possible which unquestionably has certain finite bounds in the Russian case. It does, however, assume to a great extent that Russian decision-makers are likely to be rational actors.

The Center for Naval Analyses, whose central study, "The Future Russian Navy," which has been recently published, and its com-

panion studies emanate from a framework which has been developed for analyzing future Russian naval developments. To a great extent the state of the Russian economy is postulated as the dominant consideration in the course that the Russian Navy will ultimately take. However, the nature of the future Russian leadership, ranging from autocratic to democratic, and the economic course that leadership adopts—whether it be a return to a centrally planned economy, changes along the lines advocated by the Russian Trade Unions, cautious change to a market economy as advocated by President Yeltsin, or a rapid and complete shift to a market economy as advocated by potential foreign investors—are seen as primary defining elements of the state of the Russian economy. Also, the extent to which the United States is perceived as a threat by the Russian leadership—and there is a definite divergence between the General Staff and the civilian leadership here—and the resulting military and naval doctrine are seen as primary drivers of military activity and procurement. Of all the agencies this broad approach to identification of key variables seems to have the greatest predictive value and may best account for irrationality (for our purposes here, irrationality is considered to be the inexplicable difference between state strategic objectives and doctrine and the type of naval forces and basing structure developed to support them) in the decision process.

The Naval Maritime Intelligence Center (NAVMIC), where it was pointed out that Navy data is much better than that of the other Services<sup>2</sup> because naval hardware is much easier to count accurately, appears to stress ship building and retirement rates to a much greater extent than other agencies. Noting that most Soviet ships were constructed in the 1950s and construction rates and ship building capacity have decreased sharply since, it follows that large-scale retirements were necessary, based on an assumed thirty year life for front-line warships, and actually did take place in the early 1980s.<sup>3</sup> Though retirements have decreased since then, the Russians are now faced with a much smaller navy due primarily to obsolescence. NAVMIC also stresses the essential nature of doctrine as its evolution will certainly play a central role in structuring the future shipbuilding programs undertaken by the Russian Federation.

Though they may differ somewhat as to the factors they stress in determining the nature of the Russian Navy at the start of the next century, virtually all of the above sources agree within a narrow range on the size and composition of that Navy. Working within that consensus I will attempt to deal with all of the other major indicators

deemed appropriate by the agencies mentioned above for characterizing the shape and nature of the future Russian Navy. These are:

1. The nature of future Russian leadership in the near term.
2. The Russian economic situation and prospects for economic recovery.
3. The irrevocability of decisions already taken, such as ship and facility deactivations, or which are likely to be taken in the immediate future.
4. Russian threat perception and attendant land focus versus the utility of a navy in future war.
5. Doctrine as it relates to the realities of the Russian Federation's geo-strategic and political situation.
6. Competition for military resources.
7. Considerations regarding personnel and readiness.
8. Arms control measures and their implementation.

These factors will be defined much more precisely in later sections as they are evaluated to determine their interrelationship in predicting future Russian naval developments.

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## Chapter I Endnotes

1. Aleksei Arbatov, "Cooperative Security and U.S.- Russian Relations," keynote address given at United States Naval War College Current Strategy Forum, 17 June 1992.

2. Intelligence Sources.

3. *Ibid.*



## CHAPTER II

### TZARIST AND COMMUNIST NAVIES IN RETROSPECT

There is a Russian proverb which says "Where there is a lot of water, there you may expect disaster."<sup>1</sup> This proverb, in all likelihood, is the product of Russian history. Ironically, another lesson from Russian history is that the state's survival has rarely if ever been threatened from the sea<sup>2</sup> and therefore the Russian Navy has never been a vital element of state survival. These two themes play very heavily against Russia's age old quest for empire.<sup>3</sup>

Imperialism meant for Russia not the acquisition of possessions but the swelling of the state; and the state, accustomed to enlargement, developed a sense of mission and ecumenical rule. Expansion was the overwhelming fact of Russian history. For more than 600 years almost every generation saw a substantial growth of the lands under the sway of Moscow. The few setbacks, such as defeat in the Crimean War and by the Japanese in 1904[-1905[Sic]], were in due course overcome. Hugeness legitimated the political order, and the political elite acquired a material interest, as the people acquired a psychological stake, in the empire and its growth.<sup>4</sup>

The Russian Navy, then, though its utility predates the British Fleet in antiquity by nearly a century,<sup>5</sup> has always been an adjunct to an Imperial destiny that required a predominantly land military focus. It should not be forgotten, however, that two oceans and twelve seas wash Russian shores, and that Russia has over 15,000 miles of shoreline—a greater length of shoreline than any other nation in the world.<sup>6</sup> Thus, due in large part to geography, in addition to her natural land focus there has understandably been a long-held but secondary interest in naval issues as they relate to the Russian quest to be viewed as a world rather than merely a Eurasian power. In this respect Russia could be viewed as what Sir Halford Mackinder has described as a "Heartland" power which has had at various times in its history the potential to advance from its interior bases and capture littoral regions, thereby enabling it to transform itself into a naval power as well.<sup>7</sup>

Several recurring themes from the Tzarist period emerge in Russian naval history (see Appendix A):

- (1) The overwhelming fact of expansion in Russian history.

(2) An imperial proclivity to champion the causes of Christendom.

(3) A predominant land focus borne of necessity and geography.

(4) Historic differences with Sweden and Turkey leading to a naval preoccupation with the Baltic and Black Seas.

(5) A view of naval forces as primarily an adjunct to land forces.

(6) A continuous reliance on Western technology—particularly during periods following military defeat.

(7) A predilection, except after the Russo-Japanese War, to shift her political focus to the East or inward following military defeat.

(8) A cyclic focus on navalism when the leadership is more inclined to engage internationally.

Of these only (3), (5) and (6) appear to remain active in the current Russian situation, with (7) or (8) possible, depending on changing circumstances. The demise of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet State must be seen as irreversible given Russia's current situation. Thus the historic Russian quest for empire is quiescent except, perhaps, among nationalists and revanchists. Regardless of the renewed importance of religion in Russia, its use as a justification for expansion has likewise died. Sweden is no longer in a position to seriously challenge the Russian state, and, although ethnic Turkish populations extend into Russia, there is no longer a contiguous border and animosities would now be mostly between Turkey and other non-Russian former Soviet Republics. This is not to indicate, however, that Russian differences with Turkey have not been replaced by even greater differences with other former Republics such as the Ukraine; as will be shown later, these differences with other Republics of the Former Soviet Union have profound naval implications. Similarly, disagreements with the Baltic States have replaced those with Sweden. Thus, though the antagonists in the Baltic and Black Sea have changed from the Russian perspective, the potential naval threat to Russian interests—realistically only in the Black Sea—remains valid.

Certainly, however, Russia's current situation would reinforce her land focus. Economic, nuclear and ethnic issues (relating to Russians living in non-Russian former Republics), to name but a few, make such a focus understandable. While the navy will undoubtedly continue to be seen as an adjunct to land power, several factors will have substantial influence on the future structure and utility of that navy. The degree of access the Russian Federation has to foreign resources and technology to rebuild the Russian economy, the necessity to protect strategic nuclear assets based increasingly at sea and retention of a Navy as a symbol of great power status all indicate that the utility of her Navy to Russia may well be in areas more independent of land forces than in the past. Russia's interests in and ability to influence events on the Pacific rim may logically precipitate a political focus on that region. Also, the tendency to become increasingly engaged internationally may manifest itself as well—perhaps through the United Nations or in regional associations. Here naval forces may present a meaningful but economical alternative for political access.

Several other historical trends in Russian navalism also emerge. Paul Olkhovsky of the Center for Naval Analyses points out that, from the time of Peter the Great to the present, the size of the Russian Navy had no correlation with economic strength.<sup>8</sup> While a more democratic (vice authoritarian) approach to the decision process which accommodates to some meaningful degree to public opinion may ameliorate this trend, it assumes rationality in the decision making process as perceived in the Western perspective. It should also be noted that an increased naval focus was usually the result of a response to a particular situation or adversary rather than as part of a coherent long-term national policy or strategy. Thus, historically and with few exceptions, Russian navalism has been intrinsically tied to desired expansion and threat perception. The first of these is realistically no longer an immediate factor and the second presents great possibilities for influence and structuring by the United States and other Western nations. Perception of the United States as a worst-case threat is most likely to influence Russian naval force structure, especially given lingering Cold War animosities. However, the Russian view of the United States as a potential ally during a period of acknowledged weakness—such as it was during the nineteenth century as a means of offsetting British seapower—may also tend to influence naval structure, particularly if the attitude that the United States is a natural partner rather than a potential antagonist reemerges within the leadership.

Other historical patterns from the Tzarist period emerge as well. First, there appears to be a cyclic and even sinusoidal aspect of Russian navalism. Periods of focusing on the West—during which navies were seen as a necessary and important aspect of pursuing state interests—were invariably followed by prolonged periods of inward focus and regrouping following military defeat. We may well have entered such a phase following the Soviet collapse. Second, rapid advances in naval technology often followed Russian naval defeats such as after the Crimean and Russo-Japanese Wars which would have rendered the Russian fleet obsolete and therefore ameliorated the impact of the defeat. One might argue that such a period is taking place now. However, even if a revolution in military-technical affairs is actually underway, unlike at previous times in her history Russia is in no position to take part in it to the extent that her Western counterparts are.

Moving to a more recent period in Russian history, the legacy of the Soviet Navy (a discussion of which is provided in Appendix B) is a strategy, doctrine and basing structure unsuited to the current Russian situation. As an important adjunct of Marxist ideology and state policy aimed at implementing it, the Soviet Navy was saddled with a tactically offensive (e.g., surface navy nuclear first-strike capability) but strategically defensive (i.e., strategic nuclear submarine bastion protection) doctrine aimed at preserving state power. Perhaps more importantly, the Navy had an extremely important role in signaling—not only national intentions, but the industrial and technological capacity of the proletariat.

The Russian fleet still has some utility for political signaling, as well as a significant role in protecting the nuclear arsenal at sea. However, there is no longer a need for the offensive firepower inherent in Russian surface ship design, and lack of funding and basing have rendered it truly useful only in coastal areas. The type of threats that the Russian state now faces, predominantly on land, lend themselves poorly to an offensive naval doctrine. Also, recent nuclear arms control agreements have eliminated tactical nuclear weapons on surface ships and increased the allowed percentage of strategic nuclear weapons at sea. This would suggest that Soviet doctrine (which was offensive until 1987) and naval construction supporting it to fight and win a nuclear war at sea have in large part left a naval force structure ill-suited for many of the tasks, outlined in the next Chapter, now likely to be assigned to the Navy.

The influence of Communism on the Russian Navy has been in large part negative. It has led to strategy, doctrine, and force structure to support a world view bred of ignorance of the outside world, an economically outdated Marxist-Leninist ideology, and an exaggerated sense of threat.

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## Chapter II

### Endnotes

1. Mairin Mitchell, F.R.G.S., *The Maritime History of Russia 1848-1948*, Sidgwick and Jackson Limited, London, 1949, p. 37.
2. Bruce W. and Susan M. Watson, *The Soviet Navy: Strengths and Liabilities*, Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado, 1986, p. 4.
3. Robert Wesson, *The Russian Dilemma*, Revised Edition, Praeger Publishers, New York, N.Y., 1986, CH-1.
4. *Ibid*, p. 9.
5. Fred T. Jane, *The Imperial Russian Navy*, The Thetford Press Ltd., Norfolk, UK, 1983 (first published in 1899), p.23.
6. Mitchell, Op. Cit., p. 3.
7. *Ibid*, p. 7.
8. Paul Olkhovsky, "Russia's Navy from Peter to Stalin: Themes, Trends and Debates," Center for Naval Analyses Memorandum 92-40, Alexandria, Virginia, 8 July 1992, p. 29.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **THE FUTURE RUSSIAN NAVY**

#### **Ranking The Indicators**

There are eight primary indicators which, in combination, will serve to determine the character of the Russian Navy in the future. In order of relative importance these include:

1. The nature of future Russian leadership in the near term.
2. The Russian economic situation and prospects for economic recovery.
3. The irrevocability of decisions already taken, such as ship and facility deactivations, or which are likely to be taken in the immediate future.
4. Russian threat perception and attendant land focus versus the utility of a navy in future war.
5. Doctrine as it relates to the realities of the Russian Federation's geo-strategic and political situation.
6. Competition for military resources.
7. Considerations regarding personnel and readiness.
8. Arms control measures and their implementation.

While conventional wisdom would indicate that the Russian economic situation is the most important variable in determining the future structure of the Russian Navy, a case will be made that the type of leadership that emerges will dominate the nature of future economic reform and thus the likelihood of success in achieving economic stability and expansion.

#### **THE NATURE OF FUTURE RUSSIAN LEADERSHIP**

Most analysts view Russian President Boris Yeltsin as a transitional figure. The question then becomes whether or not the reforms he

has initiated will be carried out and built upon by his successors. It also remains uncertain whether the future leadership will be more committed to change or more authoritarian and revanchist in outlook. Even while Yeltsin remains in power there are a range of possibilities on the course the reform movement will take. Within the Russian leadership there are forces that Yeltsin must accommodate in order to perpetuate his (or any successor's) power base. Thus, in areas such as economics, foreign policy, national security interests, threat perception and military doctrine, the character of the Russian leadership will have profound consequences. The type of political leadership will determine the type and potential for success of economic reform, the perspective on whether the international environment is threatening, and the nature of doctrine. These factors and how they are approached by the leadership will in large part account for the way the navy will be constituted and utilized in the future.

Another concern is the rationality of the Russian leadership in terms of how they structure the military, and specifically the navy, to reflect Russia's current geostrategic situation. In breaking with Communism there is no historical precedent for predetermining the likely outcome of decisions that are taken. To a large extent, the decision process is one of trial and error—but with no audit trail to return to the previous state should results not work out, especially since decisions tend to interact making the source of their success or failure difficult to determine at times. One might compare the Russian shift from Communism and a command economy to a democratic form of market economy to a British decision to shift to driving on the right hand side of the road. If the British decided that taxis would make the shift one day, followed by lorries (trucks) a week later and cars a month after that, if it all worked out it would roughly equate to a piecemeal shift to a new order by the Russians. Simply put, if they don't make a rapid and complete transition to a democratic (pluralistic) form of market economy—an unrealistic expectation—so many unforeseen problems are likely to be created in the process that overall success is nearly impossible. Further, this would in turn have an effect on the stability of the leadership and might produce irrational acts or even a return to the type of mentality that created the Cold War.

Regardless of the state of the Russian economy, which admittedly is the key factor in every aspect of Russia's evolution, certain types of leadership—primarily those leaning toward authoritarianism and

revanchism—could produce, within limits, a type of Russian Navy totally unexpected.

### **THE RUSSIAN ECONOMIC SITUATION AND PROSPECTS FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY**

Professor Samuel P. Huntington of Harvard University argued in May of 1954 that "It was thus a crisis [downsizing at the end of World War II] which confronted the [United States] Navy with the ultimate question: What functions do you perform which obligates society to assume responsibility for your maintenance?"<sup>2</sup> This is a question that has rarely if ever had to be asked in Russian history. Previously, the leadership determined the level of threat and justified the construction of a requisite naval force largely independent of popular political considerations.<sup>2</sup> Today, the element of popular support for resource allocation during a time of unprecedented peacetime economic dislocation becomes a factor in the Russian decision process.

Only a comprehensive discussion of Russia's economic situation could produce a realization of the complexity and magnitude of the problems it faces in that arena. Without question, the most useful encapsulation of these problems I have yet encountered is provided by Lauren Van Metre of the Center for Naval Analyses.<sup>3</sup> She postulates four courses for the Russian economic reform movement: (1) Western-led reform; (2) Russian-led reform; (3) Industry-led reform; and (4) Return to a State-run economy.

Western-led reform—which equates to the most radical reform option open to the Russian Federation—would conform to what has come to be known as the "Gaydar Program," which fosters the following precepts:

- Tight fiscal policy
- Tight credit policy (little industrial subsidization)
- New tax administration system (to collect revenue)
- Freezing of prices
- Privatization



- Tight monetary policy (control over the printing of money)
- Work with the IMF (and other international financial institutions)
- Attraction of foreign capital<sup>4</sup>
- Creation of a hard-currency Ruble

While these steps would create the best environment for a speedy stabilization of the Russian economy, they would also exacerbate differences in the class structure; disenfranchise state-run industry and associated elites through lack of subsidization; and reduce near-term military spending. In terms of political economy, however, if social divisions are exacerbated beyond a certain point, economic stability vanishes. Therefore, the very steps that are most likely to improve the Russian economy could create conditions which would lead to its further collapse. Also, even if this type of radical reform is pursued by the Russian leadership it is doubtful that it would be politically sustainable.

Russian-led reform as advocated by moderates has been forced on President Yeltsin, who still supports the "Gaydar Program." It is basically a compromise between shock therapy and an approach that would seek to cause the least possible societal dislocations. It is more attuned to supporting social welfare programs and allowing moderate inflation to prevent a widening in the disparity between those with access to involvement in privatization and others on the low side of the economic structure. It also seeks to pacify the industrial sector somewhat in that subsidization would be more acceptable. This approach to economic reform is the most politically viable solution given the divisions in political outlook demonstrated in the recent (December 1993) Russian Parliamentary Elections. It is, however, the approach which is most likely to result in gridlock. In reality, it merely equates to "muddling through" a reform process which accommodates to divergences in political outlook rather than attacks the fundamental aspects of weakness in the Russian economy.

While Russian-led reform may buy time for economic recovery to ultimately occur, that recovery would in all likelihood be much slower and eventual gains accrued to the military farther down the line. In the mean time the Russian military could expect to remain

inferior technologically and Research and Development, as well as procurement, would be severely constrained.

Industry-led reform would entail a dichotomy in extremes between state-run industry and privatization. By advocating both simultaneously, it would foster high levels of subsidization at the same time as desiring state-owned industry to be turned over to industrial elites rather than a more broad-based entrepreneurship in the process of privatization. Thus both exacerbation of the class system and high inflation caused by Central Bank subsidization of the *old* industrial sector would likely result which in turn would make significant foreign investment unlikely. Under the Communist system in Russia military procurement was dictated predominantly by the defense industry rather than the military itself. The Voenno-Promyshlennaya Komissiya (VPK), or Military-Industrial Commission, decided what was built and in what quantities during the Soviet period—and there are persistent signs which have existed from even before the August 1991 coup that the VPK is back. If this approach persists this would mean short-term gains in the military sector, but with types of low-tech equipment that would exacerbate the problem of long-term inferiority. Failure to advance toward market reform could have devastating consequences for the military—including the navy. While Kokoshin and Grachev have set themselves against the VPK system, allocating more financial support for military procurement could fuel full employment. Thus advocacy for subsidization is sure to appeal to some in the Russian leadership.

Return to a State-run economy would mark the end of the reform process and lead to further economic disintegration. It would virtually ensure no economic growth and create conditions for potential collapse of the social system. This in turn would lead to total collapse of the government and chaos bordering on civil war. Only a small constituency of state-run industry advocates exists in Russia within the Executive, legislative or even opposition leadership for this extreme. However, the industrialists advocating continued State-owned and run industry without privatization and some nationalists are closest to advocating this approach.

The consequences for the military in this worst-case scenario would probably include a near-term increase in defense spending, but in a supply-dominated economy unable to encourage innovation and advances in technology. This would lead to the same kind of problems experienced by the military before the breakup of the

Soviet Union.<sup>5</sup> Thus the navy would fall even farther behind the West in relative capability. Over the longer term almost complete stagnation of the Russian military could be expected, with virtually no prospect of a resurgence under even the most optimistic circumstances.

Van Metre also points out that the most likely course is one between the extremes of Western-led reform and a return to a State-run economy.<sup>6</sup> The reform movement will either tend to accommodate to an extreme or reject it. It is the view here that the relative success and speed of progress of the Yeltsin approach—which tends toward Western-led reform—will determine the type of future leadership to emerge in Russia and thus the ultimate course of the reform process as well. The extent to which that leadership adheres to a democratic norm—and democracy and the Russian economy are inextricably linked—will also determine its responsibility to reflect public opinion (assuming a “civic culture” is in fact emerging in the Russian Federation). In this context it is well to remember that, outside of the military itself, there is little public sense of a strategic rationale for a navy other than as some sort of “coastline protector.”<sup>7</sup> Public sentiment notwithstanding, the need to keep people at work and desire to maintain as much as possible of production capability lest it be unable to support future requirements may well combine to foster a modest continuation of naval programs above that expected under any of the economic courses discussed above.

#### IRREVERSIBILITY OF THE DECISION PROCESS

Aside from those in the economic area, decisions have been taken since the demise of the Soviet State that are irrevocable in their scope and magnitude. For instance, shipyards have been dismantled and attempts have been made to convert them to construction of merchant shipping. It should be recognized that this is to some extent a sham. For example, Baltisk shipyard is now fifty-one percent private, but it thus could easily be returned to state ownership and it is questionable if it is really under private control today. None the less, it may be useful at this point to establish a baseline for the size of the Russian Navy so the impact of the decision process can be examined. As of July of 1992 the Russian Navy included 56 strategic missile submarines, 483 surface combatants (of which 72 were for the ocean zone), 166 multipurpose submarines (of which 89 were nuclear

powered), 310 various small combatants, 950 auxiliary vessels, 1,580 aircraft and 556 helicopters.<sup>8</sup> Only one-third of those ships are modern, that is, they have served less than half their prescribed service life of 20-25 years.<sup>9</sup> This means that in the next 10-12 years the Russian Navy will lose at least 67-70 percent of its ship order of battle.<sup>10</sup> If current trends in ship retirement and construction continue, the average age of the Russian fleet will be 10-15 years by circa 2000, and the merchant marine is currently in a similar antiquated state which will necessitate forced retirements.<sup>11</sup> In the midst of this required constriction in size, the Russian naval mission has now changed from one of damage limitation to strategic deterrence. This may be manifest in hardware procurement as it implies less emphasis on such roles and missions as ASW.<sup>12</sup>

From approximately 1015 combatant ships in the late summer of 1992 the Russian Navy will shrink to between 225 and 400 ships (probably 320) by the year 2000.<sup>13</sup> Due to the current economic situation, Russian GNP in 1995-1997 is estimated to be only 35-45 percent of Soviet GNP in 1988.<sup>14</sup> This is coupled with an estimate in some circles that the Ruble may retain as little as 40 percent of its value in 1993 as compared to 1992—a conservative estimate as current trends indicate inflation may devalue the currency by closer to 50 percent—due to inflation.<sup>15</sup> Given that the traditional allotment of the Defense budget to the Navy has been less than 15 percent,<sup>16</sup> one gets the impression that the situation which will for the most part create the structure of Russia's future Navy is well nigh irreversible. Additionally, a shift from the previous military focus on procurement to a necessity for as much as 60 percent of the Russian defense budget to be devoted to personnel costs has left precious little to continue the Navy's operations and training. These economic considerations in combination will make it virtually impossible for Russia to maintain present levels of naval force structure, sustainability, modernization and research and development (R&D) into the next century.

It would appear that the decision has also been taken to drastically curtail or cancel the Russian carrier program. The *Ulyanovsk* (CVN) has already been scrapped. The *Minsk* and the *Novorossysk* are in the process of being scrapped. A good estimate would be that Russia will have no more than two carriers of any type (*Kuznetsov* (CVG) and *Varyag* (CVG)) by the year 2000.<sup>17</sup> That is assuming that the Russians make good on their promise to pay the Ukraine for *Varyag*—and that they will be able to assemble two 18-plane air wings (plus

helicopters) if they do. The denial of access to or conversion of the Nikoleyev shipyard (the largest commercial shipyard in the Former Soviet Union) in the Ukraine exclusively to commercial construction and the attendant degradation of skills required for the construction of advanced concept ships including carriers would create further problems. This could result in a situation where Russia will have to regenerate requisite proficiency and competence to resurrect her carrier program—a difficult thing to do in view of her economic situation.

According to Boris Yeltsin, nuclear submarine (and possibly all nuclear ship) shipbuilding is being consolidated at Severodvinsk.<sup>18</sup> Three shipyards, including Komsomolsk, which recently launched a Kilo class submarine but is now winding down submarine production, Nizhniy Novogorod (Gorky) and Admiralty, will no longer build submarines.<sup>19</sup> Similar to the loss of carrier building skills at Nikoleyev (Ukraine), inability to resurrect submarine building skills once they go dormant will constrain the Russian Navy in this very important area. This is a situation that is obviously not lost on the Russians, and, within their ability to do something about it, they will certainly attempt to retain as much capability and capacity as possible.

Russia is likely to be faced with the loss of facilities on the Crimea, the most important of which is Sevastopol (though agreement has been reached with Ukraine for Russia to continue to use the port through 1995), and the Nikoleyev shipyard in the Black Sea. Paldiski submarine base and nuclear training facility southwest of Tallinn in Estonia, Klaipeda in Lithuania (also a very important receiving port for forces, etc., returning from Germany), Liepaja and Jurmala (Latvia) port facilities in the Baltic, are also likely to be lost or access severely constrained. While not catastrophic in itself, this degradation of infrastructure will certainly constrain the Russian Navy in that Novorossiysk (Black Sea), Kronshtadt (near St. Petersburg) and Baltisk in Kaliningrad (East Prussia) are small and far less capable. Required new construction and housing are also problematic given the current state of the economy. It should be further noted that the Russians intended to be out of Lithuania by September of 1993.<sup>20</sup> Unless they are able to work out a similar agreement to that with the Ukrainians over Crimea, the immediacy of their departure there could also have serious consequences.

While the degradation of the Russian Navy is more a result of circumstances than conscious decisions, taken in total, the decisions

which have been made or have been forced on the Russian leadership regarding the Navy have already limited possible future construction and flexibility. As such, they have long-term consequences. The technology base is eroding and is likely to erode even farther. Unlike land and air forces, both naval forces and a maritime tradition are virtually impossible to regenerate quickly. When combined with the vast number of ships nearing obsolescence, the size of the Russian Navy at the turn of the century—not to mention its composition—will limit its utility in a global sense. Thus we can expect a major shift from “blue” or “deep water” to shallow water and littoral warfare in the focus of the Russian Navy within the next decade. This, of course, will require doctrine and training changes as well.

### RUSSIAN THREAT PERCEPTION

The Russian state has a long history of heightened security concerns due to frequent invasions and external animosities caused by her quest for empire. Thus perceptions of threat here are definitely equal in importance to reality. Not all of the threats which might be perceived as such by the Russian leadership would appear credible in the West. Russian “threat perceptions” would include, in varying degrees of concern: the People’s Republic of China, the Ukraine, Islamic fundamentalism along her borders, and, to a lesser extent, Japan and the Baltic States.<sup>21</sup> Certainly the first three of these appear to pose real security concerns.

Of a more pressing nature are areas in which Russian forces are already active, engaged in withdrawals or under fire in parts of the former Soviet Union including North Ossetia, Georgia (Abkhazia, Adzharia, South Ossetia), Ingushetia, Moldova, the Baltic States, Azerbaijan and Tadjikistan.<sup>22</sup> Protection of Russian citizens and suppression of internal drives for independence in many of the autonomous Republics, autonomous oblasts and other regions—Bashkiria, Tatarstan, North Ossetia, Ingushetia, and so forth, to say nothing of Siberia—present real security concerns as well.<sup>23</sup> With the possible exception of the Ukraine and the Baltic Republics on both land and sea frontiers (and Japan in the Sea of Okhotsk), one needs only to look at the map to realize that Russia’s primary security threats are almost exclusively on land.

Though Russia does have an extensive requirement for merchant shipping, both for transportation of goods to her Pacific Coast (according to some estimates in excess of 50%) and to support extensive commerce through the Black Sea (it is estimated that 40 percent of her exports and 50 percent of her imports travel this route) and elsewhere, only the Ukraine presents any real threat to Russian maritime trade, and then in only the most unlikely of circumstances. While in some Russian naval circles the United States Navy is still seen as a major threat—perpetuation of the threat being important in the competition for resources—our own rather precipitous reduction of naval assets should serve to ameliorate that perception. It is important to remember that what we build in the future will influence Russian building programs (response).<sup>24</sup> Thus, the continuation of such programs as the Seawolf submarine may have to be measured by the Russian reaction. The perceived threat they pose and corresponding military hardware procurements they are likely to elicit may be more important concerns than their actual utility and construction jobs retained.

#### RUSSIAN NAVAL DOCTRINE

While the Russian Navy has never had a formal doctrine of its own, the transformation that the Navy is undergoing is so tremendous that no formal doctrine is likely to emerge in the near future. The Russian draft military doctrine of May 1992 was, however, based on an assessment that the possible sources of future conflict will be:

- \* Aspirations of states (or coalitions of states) for world or regional hegemony
- \* The stationing of powerful armed formations near Russia's borders to secure a military-strategic advantage
- \* The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction
- \* Political or economic pressure on, or blackmail of Russia
- \* Violations of the rights of Russian citizens in the former Republics of the USSR.<sup>25</sup>

Within the context of a doctrine for the new Russian Navy, Aleksei Arbatov has argued that under the new [Soviet] doctrine of "defense sufficiency" the navy should be restricted to two main missions:

- (1) Defending the [Russian] coast against strikes from the sea by Carrier Task Forces and amphibious landings of the West, and
- (2) Defending strategic submarines with long-range missiles in coastal seas against enemy anti-submarine forces.

He went on to argue that the following current missions are not consonant with the doctrine of defense sufficiency:

- (1) Interdicting Atlantic and Pacific Ocean lines of communication.

- (2) Searching for and destroying strategic submarines.<sup>26</sup>

If such a doctrine were to be adopted—and there is every likelihood that it will be eventually—then the Russian Navy will once again conform to the historical Tzarist pattern of serving as an adjunct to land forces, a role for which there is relatively little requirement for global reach or presence. This seems to be borne out by Deputy Defense Minister A. Kokoshin in a white paper entitled "What Should The Russian Defense Doctrine Be?":

A totally new concept is needed also for Russia's and the CIS' navy. Moderate and non-aggressive foreign policy goals of Russia and other CIS states do not require such a large high seas navy which began to be built after N.S. Khrushchev's overthrow and which for many years had been connected to the name of Admiral P.S. [sic] Gorshkov.<sup>27</sup>

Kokoshin goes on to note, however, that by some estimates more than 50% of the goods moved between eastern and western Russia move through high seas' regions.<sup>28</sup> From this and an observation that "...in international relations one can generally observe a decline of the role of the military factor and an ascendance of economic, scientific, technical, cultural, and social parameters of the might and influence of the state,"<sup>30</sup> he postulates the type of navy necessary to execute required doctrine:

Apparently then a coast guard type navy, which closely interacts with ground and air forces, or a certain number of unsinkable



strategic nuclear missile carriers, patrolling the Barents and the Okhotsk Seas in combat readiness, are not enough. We also need definite surface ship forces, capable of taking part in providing security of sailing in those lanes of the world ocean, which are important for our national interests.<sup>30</sup>

While some, such as Aleksei Arbatov, might argue that the initial wave of Russian economic interdependence is naval presence (trade follows the flag), the question then becomes "Where's the threat?" to Russian interests in the world's sea lanes?

Perhaps more important than the shape naval doctrine is likely to take in the near term is the degree to which it reflects the perceptions of the Russian leadership. Kokoshin points out that "The relations of Russia and other states of the former Soviet Union with the USA and its allies have radically changed for the better—and this is also true with regard to China."<sup>31</sup> Thus the variable of doctrine interplays very much with the nature of future Russian leadership, threat perception and competition for military resources as a determinate of the shape, size and orientation of the future Russian Navy. Within the bounding of resource constraints, the type of navy that the Russians try to construct will to a great degree be a reflection of the doctrine they adopt.

"On the Fundamental Tenets of Russian Federation Military Doctrine," which was signed by President Boris Yeltsin and dated 2 November 1993, contains an important shift regarding nuclear weapons which has profound implications for the Russian Navy. For the first time Russian doctrine states that "Russia retains the right to make a first strike against territories, troops, or military installations of an aggressor state even if the latter does not possess nuclear weapons but is under the "umbrella" of some ally or military-political bloc."<sup>32</sup> Thus, unlike former Soviet doctrine which eschewed the first use of nuclear weapons, the Russian Federation has explicitly and publicly espoused the concept of deterrence. While some might argue that this is merely an academic point in that the mere existence of nuclear weapons necessitates a potential opponent to react as if Russia might strike first regardless of her stated policy, what is really important is that the Russians might now put greater importance on their nuclear arsenal than previously. This appears to be particularly so considering the overall weakening of Russia's conventional military capability. In that the Russian nuclear arsenal will be increas-

ingly at sea, the required naval capability to protect it becomes an even more significant element of Russian strategic interest.

### COMPETITION FOR MILITARY RESOURCES

Russia's economic situation, threat perception and doctrine force its primary focus to be on land. Russia does have territorial disputes with Norway in the Barents Sea and with Japan in the Kuril Islands, where 3000-4000 fishing violations per year are reported, as well as with the Ukraine and Kazakhstan over distribution of the Black Sea Fleet and Caspian Sea Flotilla respectively. She also has concerns over the roughly eleven million ethnic Russians that reside outside the Russian Federation, including the 2.5 million that make up approximately 80% of the Crimean population, amongst a Ukrainian population of 52 million.<sup>33</sup> Surely friction lingers over the circumstances surrounding the loss of the Baltic States which signaled the demise of the Soviet State, as well as concerns regarding loss of port facilities and housing there. This is not to mention the vast amounts of Russian trade that transit the Baltic and Black Seas. But none of these situations rivals the internal focus that Russia now faces. Consequently, as has been the case throughout her history, in the quest for resources over the long term the Army, or perhaps the Air Force in the near term, will undoubtedly prevail. As a former Naval Attache to Moscow points out, a briefing for Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell, in 1991 included about 70 Army Generals but only one "token" Admiral.<sup>34</sup> This should be instructive of the relative priority the Ministry of Defense now places on the Navy. This having been said, lessons from the Gulf War have not been lost on the Russian naval leadership. The utility of air power as demonstrated in the early phases of the War is undoubtedly foremost among these. Consequently, the Russian Air Force is likely to receive the lion's share of available support and resources in the near term, with the Navy, primarily because of its nuclear deterrent mission, also receiving more than its expected share of resource allocation in comparison to the Army as well.

### CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING PERSONNEL AND READINESS

Perhaps the most serious impediment to the capabilities of any future Russian Navy lies in the areas of personnel and readiness—two

areas that are intrinsically tied to each other in any Navy. But unlike the United States Navy which has about 10% Officers and 1% Warrant Officers, with a 59% career enlisted force, the Russian Navy is comprised of approximately 22% Officers, 8% Warrant Officers, only around 7% career enlisted and over 63% conscripted sailors.<sup>35</sup> This makes for a force that is highly reliant on Officers and Warrant Officers for technical skills, but which lacks a professional cadre of Non-commissioned Officers (NCOs) and is obliged to retrain most of its workforce with shortened periodicity as conscripts reach the term of their service. The traditional term of service for conscripts has been three years, but that was reduced to two years in 1991 and is only 18 months today. With a draft call that takes place twice each year, that equates to, at a minimum, a 25 percent turnover in enlisted personnel every six months. Captain Serge Yonov relates that, while he was Naval Attache, in conversations with a senior Northern Fleet staff officer he mentioned that when he was in command of USS *Connole* he knew the names of every crewman aboard the ship, to which the officer replied "What for?"<sup>36</sup> This comment does reflect the officer-enlisted relationship in the Russian Navy. The point here, however, is that with such rapid turnover there just isn't time to conduct the training requisite of a professional Western-style navy.

It should also be noted that the Russian Navy is/was disproportionately manned by Ukrainians, particularly in the Officer and Warrant Officer corps, with estimates running in excess of one-third.<sup>37</sup> Other estimates have the Northern Fleet Officer corps running as high as 40 percent Ukrainian.<sup>38</sup> The potential loss of this manpower source, in conjunction with a dwindling demographic pool and a failure to respond to the draft indicate that ship repair and manning of the force as well as readiness are problematic. When this is coupled with the fact that no major Fleet-wide exercises have been conducted in over two years<sup>39</sup> (of note, several multi-unit exercises have been noted in the Barents Sea—which may be the new military doctrine laboratory since the resurrection of the May 1992 Draft Military Doctrine—in 1993), one gets a picture of a force that is to a large extent hollow. It is, of course, true that due to lack of an adequate forward basing structure and the resultant requirement to provide logistical support and repair while underway or at anchor as well as in acknowledgement of the wear and tear of cold weather operations on ships, the Russians have long considered readiness highest when in port. Without requisite training, however, both technical proficiency and combat readiness in the Russian Navy must now be

at low ebb and are likely to get worse. It should be noted, however, that the submarine force continues to receive top priority and thus, with the exception of a decreased deployment rate, readiness is estimated to remain high.

The situation is compounded by a new attitude toward the military and toward military service which has developed in the Russian population since the 19-21 August 1991 coup attempt.<sup>40</sup> First, the military has been exposed as an elite which had access to special privileges during the Communist period, and which thus has been able to enrich itself at public expense. So great has been the outrage that the number of Officers killed on the streets, (not counting ethnic violence), has been reported to have increased from one in 1988 to 59 in 1989 to 97 in 1990.<sup>41</sup> Second, the feeling of pride in military service has to a large extent subsided for many of the same reasons. Finally, with government moves toward privatization there is a competition for brainpower in the private sector that never before existed. Consequently, not only have the numbers of prospective naval candidates decreased but their quality has diminished also.

Other problems such as low (and late) pay, hyperinflation and the inability of the apparatchik to manage and bring resources and the capability of their people together have created virtual chaos within the Navy. It has been pointed out that there are over 14,000 Officers in Moscow alone without housing and, in addition, there are in excess of 20,000 sailors in the Baltic States that will return to Russia with no prospects of housing.<sup>42</sup> The Navy, as with the rest of the Russian military, has been forced to sell excess equipment and real estate and even rent its labor to the civilian sector in order to feed the troops. Selling equipment, however, can only last so long as the world arms market fell by 47% in 1991<sup>43</sup> and is likely to drop even farther. The Navy has also been forced into the business of growing its own food. Admiral Vladimir Yegorov, the current Baltic Fleet Commander, related that his single biggest worry is food.<sup>44</sup> The seriousness of the situation is highlighted by the relief for cause of Admiral Khvatov, the Pacific Fleet Commander, in March of 1993 when four of his sailors on Russkiy Island died of malnutrition and hazing and as many as 600 others required hospitalization for similar problems<sup>45</sup>—though most of these probably required medical care more as a result of neglect than because of the shortage of food.

The reason for this is not only the inadequacy of the military budget to provide for food, housing, pay and clothing—not to men-

tion operating, maintenance and training funds—but the failure of the procurement and distribution system as well. The “Rear Services” or procurement and logistic system responsible for support of the military has been tremendously affected by instability in the economy and almost complete erosion of the favored position of the military in the Communist system which gave the services it provided prioritization over other sectors of state responsibility. Thus there is nothing much available to distribute and units and installations have been forced to fend for themselves. This detracts from their primary responsibilities and could create a quasi-permanent situation. Additionally, units have become increasingly reliant on local communities in which they reside for such things as food and shelter. This dependence has to some extent created a concomitant decrease in reliance on Moscow—and with it a lessening of ability or desire to respond to all directives from the center of authority. Inability of the central leadership to adequately provide for the Navy in the future can only serve to increase its independence of action in providing for vital needs.

It may appear unlikely that the Russian Navy has a real manpower problem when it is in the process of significant downsizing. However, there is a rapid turnover of the conscripted force and an inability to keep the Officer and Warrant Officer cadre due to lack of basic needs. For instance, Boris Yeltsin indicated in early 1992 that 300,000 Officers and their families lacked adequate housing.<sup>46</sup> The resulting exodus from military service to the more lucrative private sector has exacerbated manning shortfalls, particularly in areas requiring a high degree of education. While a contract approach to service has been tried with some success in an attempt to replace conscription, the costs of such a program (roughly 1300 Rubles per month for Officers; 1100 rubles a month for enlisted personnel, etc., according to open source estimates) are likely to be prohibitive in that pay would have to be substantially above the current conscript pay of roughly 55 Rubles per month (note that, if traded on the open market, the Ruble to dollar exchange rate would today be in the neighborhood of 1176:1) Please also note that the Ruble is devaluing so quickly that the rates of pay indicated here are changing rapidly and are only intended to give some type of indication of the disparity between conscript and contract pay. Additionally, the disparity in pay between conscripts and contract naval personnel is likely to cause personnel problems over the long term which will serve to further undermine morale and discipline. Thus the acquisition of adequate

manpower and brainpower and/or the retention of it in the Russian Navy appears to be beyond the capability of the current Russian state.

#### **ARMS CONTROL MEASURES AND THEIR IMPLEMENTATION**

The START II Treaty sets a limit of 2,160 Submarine Launched Ballistic Missile (SLBM) warheads out of a total Russian allowance of 4,250. Reduction of inventories is to be completed by seven years after entry-into-force of the treaty.<sup>48</sup> This START II - Phase I limit equates to 50.8% of the Russian strategic nuclear arsenal at sea, and substantially more than the approximately 29 percent that will be at sea when START I limits have been achieved.<sup>49</sup> By the year 2003 when all START II - Phase II reductions must be complete between 1,700 and 1,750 SLBM warheads of a total of between 3,000 and 3,500 warheads—or a maximum of 50% if the Russians stay at the upper limit of their allowance—will be based at sea.<sup>49</sup> Also, there is a problem with START II ever taking effect since START I limits, including removal of all strategic weapons from all non-Russian former Soviet Republics, must take place prior to START II taking effect and the Ukraine is balking at losing its nuclear trump card. Regardless of the status of START II, the Russian strategic deterrent will be increasingly at sea—approximately double the twenty-five to thirty percent at sea at the current time.

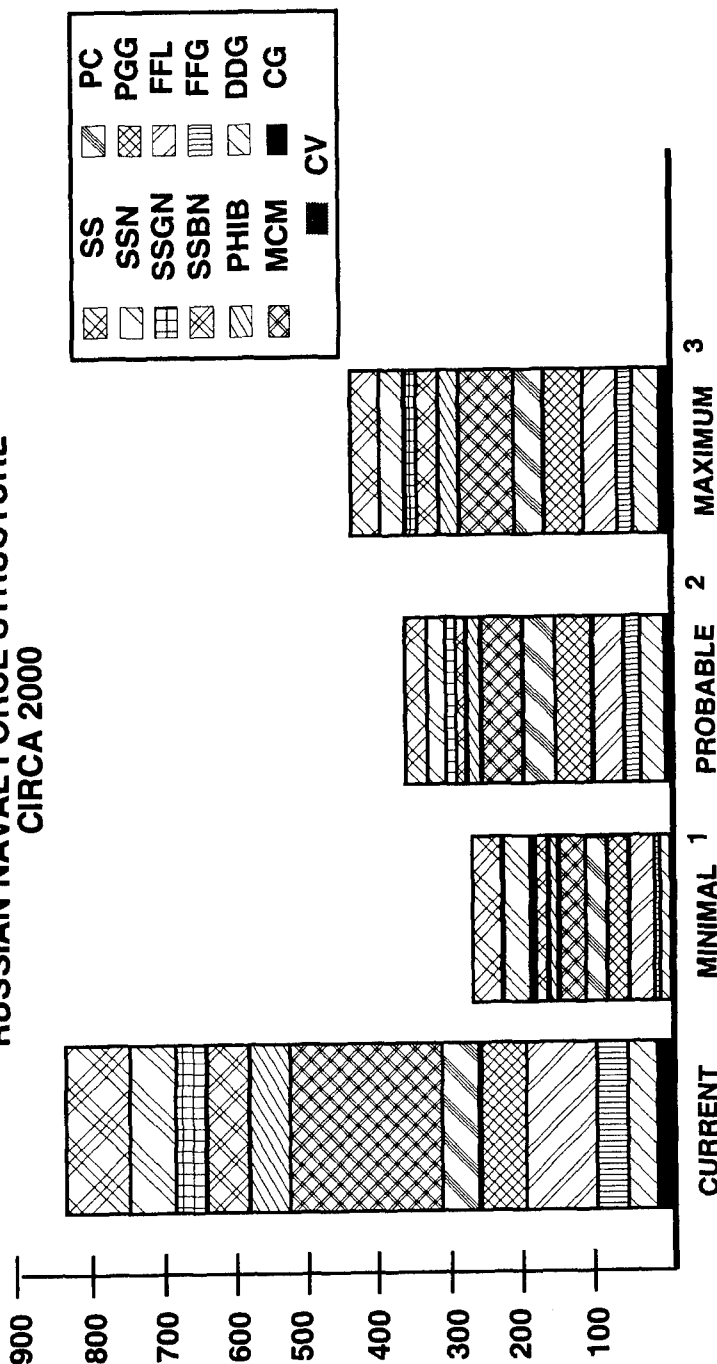
An important consideration for the top Russian leadership may be that control of sea-based nuclear weapons is more firmly in their hands than those on land, even though those on land are controlled by state security forces and those at sea are controlled by naval officers. Also, given the Russian record on nuclear safety matters, both popular sentiment and political motivation may make the basing of nuclear weapons at sea much more acceptable than on land. Thus, if the Russians choose not to retain systems up to the upper limit of the treaty, it might be expected that an even larger portion of their nuclear arsenal will be based at sea—possibly approaching the 60% indicated by Aleksei Arbatov in June of 1992.<sup>50</sup> Surely protection of this deterrent capability and symbol of national prestige is imperative, and Russian naval forces will be structured to accomplish this vital task.

## THE RUSSIAN FLEET CIRCA 2000

One could speculate endlessly about the size and shape of the Russian Navy at the turn of the next century. As has, it is hoped, been demonstrated above, many factors will interact to determine that shape. Surely the Russian leadership—and particularly the naval leadership—would prefer a smaller high-tech Navy capable of providing coverage to the seaborne nuclear arsenal and anti-air coverage on Russia's coasts, but one that is also capable of interacting with regional associations with other naval powers or the United Nations. Such a Navy would also decrease the need for manpower on ageing manpower-intensive ships—another prime consideration.

It is the view here, however, that such a Navy is unlikely. All indications are that Russia will sell or scrap her older and manpower-intensive units and retain only those necessary to maintain her strategic nuclear deterrent (*Typhoon*-class SSBNs) and coastal defense. By simple logic of obsolescence and based on unclassified sources, one can gather what the Russian Navy will look like at the turn of the century. The table on the next page, which is derived from the Naval Institute's *Combat Fleets of the World 1990/1991*<sup>51</sup> and is based on three possible ship retirement rates of all ships over ten, fifteen (the expected rate) and twenty years respectively, demonstrates the Russian naval situation (of note a similar situation exists with respect to naval air assets). As is graphically depicted by the ship types indicated, nearly three-fourths of the Russian Navy by the year 2000 will have virtually no utility in waters over 200 NM from the Russian coastline. Remaining units in the Baltic, Black<sup>52</sup> and Caspian Seas will likely all be small and suited primarily for coastal patrol and ASW. The rest of the force will be configured primarily for anti-submarine and anti-air warfare missions such as those associated with SSBN bastion protection and coastal defense. While enough capacity appears to exist to support Russian engagement in naval regional associations to remain a global player (having forfeited her position as a global superpower), there are just not enough of the right kind of units, nor is there the basing structure, to support SLOC protection of the extensive Russian trade routes. Only remaining *Udaloy* (approximately twenty units in all) and a single *Kara* homeported at Petropavlovsk which is likely to be retired by 1995 and units yet to be laid down will have true blue-water ASW capability. *Souremennyy* is primarily an AAW/ASUW ship, which is

# RUSSIAN NAVAL FORCE STRUCTURE CIRCA 2000



NOTES:  
 1. BASED ON RETIREMENT OF ALL SHIPS OVER TEN YEARS OLD  
 2. BASED ON RETIREMENT OF ALL SHIPS OVER FIFTEEN YEARS OLD  
 3. BASED ON RETIREMENT OF ALL SHIPS OVER TWENTY YEARS OLD

TABLE I



most suited for extended coastal defense. Other remaining surface units will be inconsequential. Russian general-purpose submarines will of necessity have to be used in the bastion protection role, as will the one or two carriers remaining circa 2000. The carrier(s) would be used as an extension of land-based fighter coverage, noting the role of the very capable SU-27K Flanker—or more correctly the Sukhoi SU-33 naval variant of the SU-27K—configured to land aboard.

A key indicator of true ability to maintain a Blue Water SLOC protection capability is in the Mobile Logistic Support Force (MLSF) ships. If their retirement rate exceeds the general combatant retirement rate, then Russia is leaning toward a coastal defense fleet. At the start of 1994 the Russian Navy will have a support structure in which only 68 of over 250 ships in major classes will be of fifteen years or less age.<sup>53</sup> At this same point in time Russia will have only 22 MLSF ships—and no tenders or oilers—less than 20 years old and only 54 total MLSF ships of less than 30 years age. These figures, however, may be somewhat misleading in that, unlike combatant ships, support ships are rarely rendered obsolete by advances in technology and therefore can remain in service much longer. Five categories of ships bear particular attention—submarine tenders, repair ships, fleet replenishment ships, oilers and ammunition ships—as these comprise the MLSF. The Russians have built no submarine tenders since 1972, seventeen repair ships since 1978, only six (and no large) fleet replenishment ships since 1978, no oilers since 1968, and no ammunition ships since the 1960s. Thus the average age of submarine tenders, oilers and ammunition ships will be in excess of 30 years at the turn of the century. Only the seventeen repair ships which have all entered fleet service since 1984 and two *Kaliningrad* class fleet replenishment ships which entered the fleet in 1983, and ships yet to be built, will be of less than 20 years age circa 2000. Table II on the next page indicates the relative aging of the Russian MLSF over time as well as the likely overall decrease in useful vessels in this very important type of shipping.<sup>54</sup> Noting the reliance of the Russian Navy on MLSF type ships when operating at distant anchorages, absence of a significant support ship building program should indicate a conscious decision to constrain operations in relation to SLOC protection in the world's trade routes. Table II<sup>55</sup> certainly demonstrates the severe constraint on distant operations that will take place by the year 2000, regardless of numbers of combatants remaining in the Russian Fleet, if significant steps are not undertaken to revitalize the Russian MLSF.

MAJOR RUSSIAN AUXILIARY UNITS

NUMBER OF SHIPS

150

100

50

0

TOTAL

30 OR LESS

30 OR LESS

20 OR LESS

20 OR LESS

30 OR LESS

20 OR LESS

20 OR LESS

TOTAL

1990

1994

2000

AGE OF FLEET

TENDERS

REPAIR SHIPS

AMMUNITION SHIPS

OILERS

FLEET REPLENISHMENT SHIPS

Category	TENDERS	REPAIR SHIPS	AMMUNITION SHIPS	OILERS	FLEET REPLENISHMENT SHIPS
TOTAL	13	36	10	20	32
30 OR LESS	10	36	10	2	28
30 OR LESS	3	29	1	20	3
20 OR LESS	13	33	6	3	21
20 OR LESS	8	1	1	21	13
30 OR LESS	2	8	1	17	2
20 OR LESS	2	2	4	2	2

TABLE II

One could argue that the size and state of the MLSF only provides part of the picture regarding Russian ability to operate world wide. Certainly a significant amount of fleet support at anchorages is provided by civilian shipping. As will be discussed in the next section on construction and basing, however, the state of the Russian merchant fleet is in even worse shape than is her Navy. Thus Russia's overall ability to support Blue Water naval operations will be severely constrained at the end of the decade. Based on her draft military doctrine which assumes a distinctly defensive bent, moreover, the constriction of Russian ability to project naval power appears consistent with her stated security objectives.

Admittedly, port visits to such places as Boston; Copenhagen; Wilhelmshaven; Kiel; Tromso; Liverpool; Halifax; Kadiz; Gibraltar; Colombo; Pusan; Tsing Tao (China); Cam Ranh Bay; and Abu Dhabi have been on the increase in 1993. In terms of significant deployments of meaningful rather than merely symbolic political utility, however, only infrequent surface unit deployments to the Mediterranean and/or Indian Ocean in support of trade SLOCs will be remotely feasible. As will be discussed below, the lack of resources and capacity to construct and base a modern high-tech Navy make it extremely unlikely that the shape of Russia's future Navy will be appreciably altered from that indicated in the Tables I and II.

It should also be reiterated that, as the Navy increasingly moves away from centralized control while becoming more reliant on regional support for such requirements as food and housing, so also are force structure decisions shifting dramatically away from the Navy and industry to the central political leadership. Thus the predilection of the top naval leadership, which has not as yet been purged of a Communist doctrinal mentality, to perpetuate a NATO or U.S. naval threat may increasingly be subordinated to political decisions tied to the state of the economy.

### CONSTRUCTION AND BASING

The loss of bases and facilities in the Baltic States and the Ukraine has been discussed earlier, as has consolidation of nuclear submarine and perhaps all nuclear construction at Severodvinsk. Two older shipyards, Nikolayev (which has always constructed ships primarily for the civilian sector) and Kaliningrad (Baltiysk), have been con-

verted to civilian production with little impact on the Navy. The St. Petersburg North shipyard continues production but is a likely candidate for conversion once its current production run of Destroyer types is complete. While Russia retains approximately two-thirds of the shipbuilding potential of the former Soviet Union, turbine construction was centered in the Ukraine, the production of ASW weapons in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, and navigation equipment was produced in Azerbaijan.<sup>56</sup> Equally indicative of specialization within the shipbuilding industry is an estimate that all thick steel (over 12 millimeters) for Soviet naval construction came from the Ukraine.<sup>57</sup> Thus a picture emerges where construction capacity may well be maintained in the industrial base, but naval shipbuilding is shrinking rapidly and remains dependent on other former Soviet Republics for key components until Russia can generate certain industrial capacities to become independent of reliance on other states. Inter-CIS economic ties may negate this dependency over the short term, but over the longer course Russia will undoubtedly require self-sufficiency for her military hardware requirements. In the mid-1980s Soviet naval construction was probably capable of producing 10-12 ships and 6-8 submarines per year. Today that capacity is much less. For instance, shortly before his retirement in mid-1992, Admiral of the Fleet Chernavin indicated that no new keels would be laid down that year.<sup>58</sup> No new cruisers have been laid down for at least two years.<sup>59</sup> President Yeltsin related in November of 1992 to the South Korean National Assembly "At the present time we are halving the building of submarines, and I think in 2-3 years we will in general stop the building of new submarines for military purposes." Here he was referring only to Pacific construction at Komсомolsk, but it does mark a significant construction trend. In any case, the Russians have indicated they intend to produce only one nuclear and one conventional submarine each year.<sup>60</sup> In terms of research and development, skill of the labor force and ability to retain the capacity to produce critical components, such a construction rate could not be expected to sustain the technological base to rapidly expand capacity in the future. This could become more problematic for Russia when large numbers of *Victor* III class submarines reach the end of their useful life shortly after the turn of the century. The Russians may, however, be able to ameliorate the effects of inability to produce units incorporating new technology by introducing fourth-generation technology in existing units. There are indeed indications that they are doing just that at the current time, particularly in submarines.

It may be useful at this point to note that building two ships per year with a 30 year service life equates to 60 units.<sup>61</sup> Today a safe estimate of Russian ships of less than fifteen years of age in their inventory would be only one carrier and approximately eighty-eight major surface combatants (CGN/CG/DDG/FFG/FFL) of which thirty-seven are of use only in border patrol or coastal ASW; twenty-two Fleet Ballistic Missile Submarines and forty-six general purpose nuclear submarines. Not counting ships still under construction or yet to be laid down, these numbers should be around two carriers; forty-five major surface combatants (twenty-one of limited coastal use); thirteen Fleet Ballistic Missile Submarines and twenty-five general purpose nuclear submarines, respectively, by the year 2000.<sup>62</sup> Thus a building program of approximately three surface units and two submarines yearly would have to be sustained to maintain a 90-ship surface and 60-ship submarine inventory (though as mentioned above the stated Russian submarine construction rate would over time maintain only a 30 ship inventory in both nuclear and conventional units). Certainly that is a rate which could be sustained with existing Russian construction facilities—but likewise it is a rate inconsistent with the current Russian economy.

We have seen, for instance, in 1992 alone a reduction of twelve surface combatants and thirty-five submarines in the Northern Fleet, with additions of only five surface combatants and three submarines (new construction and Fleet transfers).<sup>63</sup> While Russian land force levels appear to be on a plateau, the Russian submarine order of battle (OOB) is dropping like a rock and can be expected to decrease by another 45 percent by 1995 or 1996. The key indicator to watch here is the *Victor* III class of submarine. While nearing block obsolescence just after the turn of the century, some older units observed appear to be in a less than optimum state of readiness. Should retirement of some units of this class occur as early as 1995, it may be indicative of the inability of the Russian Navy to maintain expected force levels in most other classes of ship as well. This brings to mind another problem—the destruction of units, and particularly those with nuclear reactors. A rough count of nuclear reactors on Russian submarines that will likely be scrapped due to age or in compliance with provisions of the START II treaty which limits the signatories to a maximum of 1750 single-warhead SLBMs at sea<sup>64</sup> and retirement of nuclear powered icebreakers would indicate that well in excess of 200 reactors will have to be dismantled within the next ten years. Given Russia's track record on environmental issues—and particularly

those associated with nuclear material—the consequences of this aspect of ship deactivation could be cataclysmic. Outside help from the West would, however, provide the U.S. with good intelligence on the Russian naval drawdown.

The state of the Russian merchant marine is similar to the state of the Navy. *Izvestiya* has reported that Russia now retains only 56 percent of her merchant fleet, which was once the world's fifth largest and carried nearly 80 percent of the former Soviet Union's imported goods.<sup>65</sup> The remainder of the merchant fleet has been divided among the Ukraine (26 percent), Latvia (5.6 percent), Estonia (3.2 percent), Lithuania (1.9 percent), Georgia (2.8 percent) and Azerbaijan (3.1 percent).<sup>66</sup> It is also an ageing merchant marine, with an average age of nearly 16 years compared to a world average of 10.6 years. A Deputy Minister of the former Soviet Merchant Marine admits that as many as 400 vessels [of the undivided total] with a total capacity of 6.8 million metric tons were designated for scrapping between 1991 and 1996.<sup>67</sup> Thus, its continued utility in the next century is every bit as questionable as that of the Russian Navy.

Of perhaps equal importance with constraints on Russian naval construction is the virtual complete lack of any forward basing structure. Russia has pulled out of Cam Ranh Bay, and, with the current lack of ability or desire to support Castro, access to Cuba and perhaps Angola as well is also severely constrained. While the Russians have always tended to operate from remote anchorages while deployed and appear comfortable with it, it is safe to say that insufficient forward bases and repair facilities exist for the Russian Navy. This is particularly true when we consider how small the Russian Navy will be and how few auxiliary ships as it is likely to have at the turn of the century.

All things considered, constriction of ship building capacity and lack of previously available basing facilities in the Baltic, Black Sea and elsewhere will only serve to exacerbate naval problems discussed above in this section.

One possibility of note is worthy of mention. LCDR Dan Gallagher of the Defense Intelligence Agency strongly believes that, to consolidate maintenance and training requirements, etc., all Russian Fleet Ballistic Missile Submarines will be consolidated in the Northern Fleet by the start of the next century.<sup>68</sup> Considering that only *Typhoon* and *Delta IV* (and possibly *Delta III*) SSBNs are likely to have to be supported, this assessment makes a lot of sense. Basing at

Murmansk (Polyarnyy), Sayda Guba and Litsa Guba would probably serve nicely for such a consolidation.<sup>69</sup>

### NUCLEAR ISSUES

Today strategic nuclear weapons still remain on Ukrainian, Byelorussian and Kazakhstani soil. As with the two other Republics, the Ukrainians desire to "accentuate" their sovereignty. While this may not appear to be a naval problem, it certainly has naval overtones. There are currently 1,260 strategic nuclear warheads in 176 silos and two strategic airfields in the Ukraine.<sup>70</sup> Considering its concentration of military-industrial infrastructure as well, the Ukraine presents a much larger problem on Russia's border than Turkey ever did.

While agreement has been reached on a three-year period of dual command of the Black Sea Fleet, many differences still remain between Russia and the Ukraine over such things as ultimate disposition of that Fleet. In their very unique relationship these two former Republics can agree on such things as sale of the *Varyag* (CVG) to Russia while at the same time disagreeing vehemently over such important issues as questions concerning the legality of transfer of the Crimea to the Ukraine in 1954 by Nikita Khrushchev. Not only, as noted earlier, are important naval components available currently only in the Ukraine, but ethnic Russian populations reside there. The utilization of Ukrainian strategic nuclear weapons as a "trump" card for resolution of the basing, Crimean, and Fleet division questions, among others, thus makes the Ukrainian situation an issue of considerable concern for Russia. Also, competition for resources to destroy nuclear weapons will exist with respect to destruction of naval (submarine and icebreaker) nuclear power plants if they are in fact returned to Russia as President Leonid Kravchuk has indicated they will be between 1994 and 2000.<sup>71</sup>

### INTERACTION OF THE VARIABLES

Each of the variables discussed above is very dependent on the type of leadership that emerges in Russia over the next decade. The success of economic reform will in large part be determined by the extent of outside assistance received by Russia. This in turn will

assuredly be dictated by the extent to which Russia continues to develop democratic norms and a legal system able to attract foreign investment. The extent to which Russia returns to her Communist past will tremendously affect her ability to restructure and remain a global player. Thus threat perception and doctrine will likewise reflect the nature and perceptions of the leadership.

In summary, certain realities have been thrust upon the Russian Navy with which any future leadership will have to contend. These include an ageing fleet, lack of manpower and resources, a decreasing basing and shipbuilding capacity, and a requirement to dismantle numerous nuclear reactors just to name a few. The one fact of the Russian situation that has not changed, however, is geography. She retains a dominant continental (land) security focus that has only been exacerbated by the demise of the Soviet empire which has led to rekindling of old animosities and a situation where as many as 25 million ethnic Russians now live outside Russia.<sup>72</sup> The ability to contend with these kinds of problems, however, is intrinsically linked to recovery of the Russian economy—which in turn is tied to the type of leadership that ultimately emerges.

Without question Russia's future Navy will of necessity be smaller and relatively more modern, but it is highly unlikely that it will emerge as the technological equal of Western navies. Considering the combination of Russia's problems and the relative importance of the Navy in her overall prioritization, one can only expect a continued decline in Russian navalism (i.e., worldwide engagement of the Navy to further Russian political objectives) over the next decade. While naval development in general tends to take on a sinusoidal pattern, this phenomenon is likely to be severely dampened in the Russian case.

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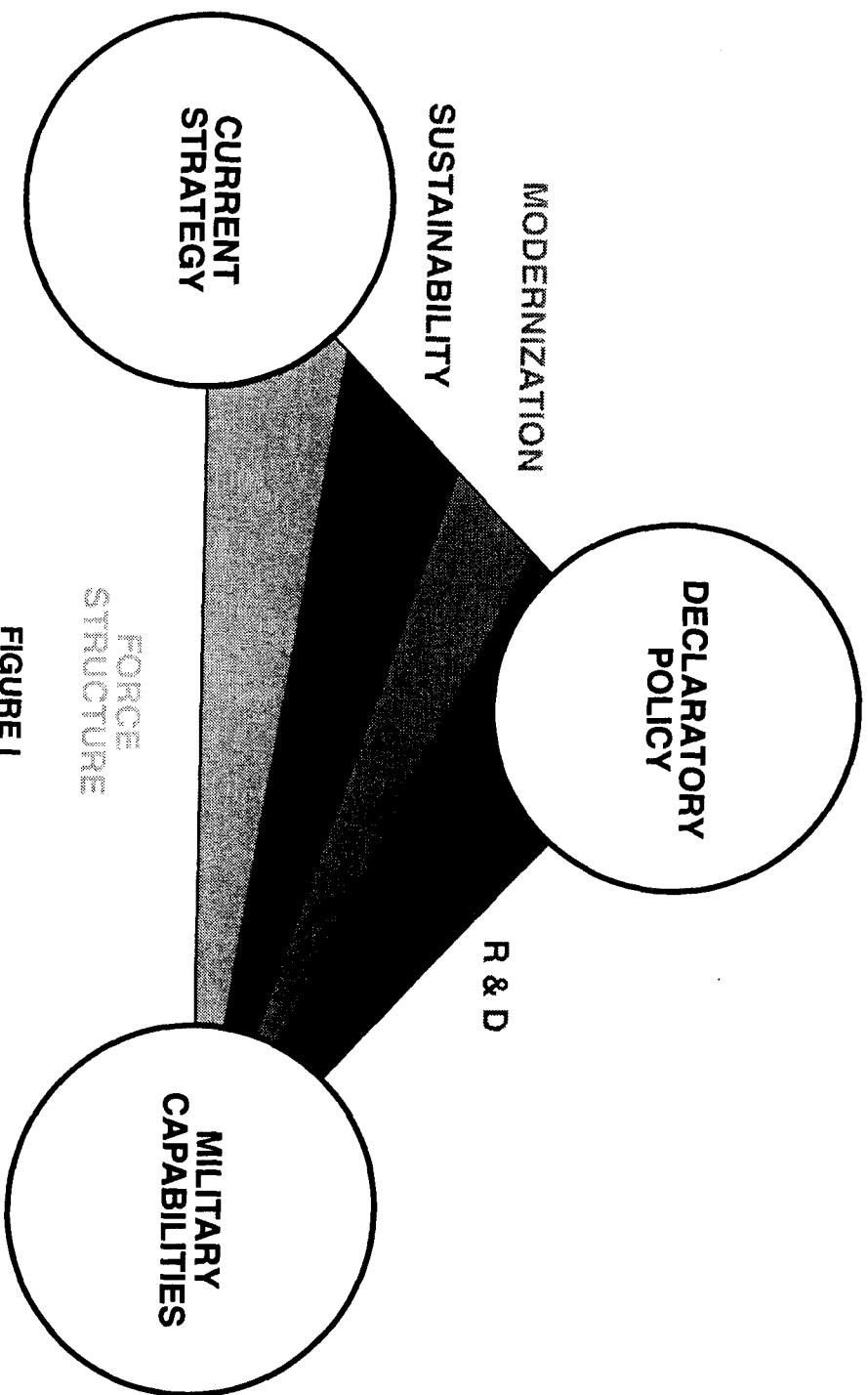
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## CHAPTER IV CONCLUSIONS

On 26 July of 1992 the historic "Andreevskiy" flag, designed by Peter the Great and flown on ships of the Russian fleet from 1712-1917, was raised aboard ships of the former Soviet Union officially heralding the rebirth of the Russian Navy. Yet this rebirth was one borne of the defeat of the Soviet Union in the Cold War and the utter debasement of the Communist system. One could liken this defeat to those suffered by the Navy during the Tzarist period in the Crimean War and the Russo-Japanese War. Following those wars rapid changes in naval technology (steel-hulled and steam powered ships, and the *Dreadnought* class of Battleship respectively) ameliorated the magnitude of the naval disasters that Russia had suffered. One might contend that we are currently experiencing a military-technical revolution in military affairs—certainly an observer of Operation Desert Storm would have to say so—of such magnitude that the pattern of fortuitous timing in Russia's Cold War defeat will continue her historical naval tradition following naval disaster. However, the complexity of modern ships of the line, and the cost and required technical ability to produce them will combine to hinder future Russian Navy modernization and thus extend significantly the historically precedented period of inward focus and regrouping experienced after other military defeats.

As demonstrated by the graphic on the following page, the current strategy of any nation is dictated primarily by existing military capabilities. As a nation enunciates a declaratory policy which exceeds the limitations of its current military capabilities there are four areas it must consider and address. These include force structure, sustainability, modernization and research and development (R&D). In the case of the Russian Navy, all four areas have been and, with the exception of the modernization program, will be further decremented as she moves toward the 21st century.<sup>1</sup>

As stated earlier, as of July of 1992 the Russian Navy consisted of 56 strategic missile submarines, 483 surface combatants (of which 72 were for the ocean zone), 166 multipurpose submarines (of which 89 were nuclear powered), 310 various small combatants and 950 auxiliary vessels.<sup>2</sup> Only one-third of those ships are modern and in the next 10-12 years the Russian Navy will lose at least 67-70 percent of its ship order of battle.<sup>3</sup> Using these figures supplied by the Chief



**FIGURE I**

of the Russian Main Navy Staff Center for Operational-Tactical Research, this equates, not including new construction yet to enter the fleet, to a 288-317 combatant ship and 285-314 auxiliary vessel fleet by the turn of the century. The Russian ships needed to support operations in distant waters—the Mobile Logistics Support Force—will nearly all be over thirty years of age and for the most part unservicable. This alone will severely constrain the types of operations in which the Russians can engage.

It should also be noted that, because of lack of funding, for the first time in over 60 years not one new ship was laid down in 1992.<sup>4</sup> The loss or conversion of shipbuilding capacity and port facilities in the Baltic, Black and Caspian Seas will constrain the Navy in operational patterns and ability to construct and maintain certain types of ships such as carriers. Though those ships that will still be active at the turn of the century will be technologically superior to those in the fleet today—with fewer and newer classes of ships retained, and, thus, with less repair and logistical requirements—at a maximum, no more than ten percent of the fleet will have been constructed between now and the end of the decade. Consequently, and because of the type of ships retained, the future Russian Navy will be constrained to missions of protection of the seabased nuclear arsenal, coastal protection (e.g., along the North Cape and across the Northern Norwegian Sea/Sea of Lofoten out to no more than 1,500 NM from existing bases) and “show the flag” type operations of only symbolic significance, perhaps in conjunction with United Nations or regional associations. Of these the requirement to protect the nuclear arsenal will be paramount.

Professionalism and manning will also constrain the quality of Russia's Navy in the future. The high turnover rate of the conscripted enlisted force, lack of any real non-commissioned officer corps and the migration of the Officer corps to the private sector,—all these things militate against the conditions necessary to establish a truly capable and professional Navy, notwithstanding any contributions that contract personnel might make. Lack of funding for training, and having to spend time in alternative activities to find ways to pay for food and other necessities of life will only serve to exacerbate the situation. A centrifugal movement away from central authority now evident within Russia as a whole, but particularly acute within the Russian Navy due to such factors as subsistence requirements tying the Navy increasingly to local populations, will also serve to undermine long-term stability. A land example of the migration away from

central authority would be the inability of the 14th Army to control Communist sympathizing Officers within its midst in Moldova. In fact, though the High Commands of Forces have disappeared, they may of necessity return with both a peacetime and wartime function.

The shape and mission of the Russian Navy will be determined by the nature of the Russian leadership, the Russian economic situation, the irrevocability of decisions taken or thrust upon the Russian political and naval leadership, threat perception, land focus, doctrine, competition for military resources, personnel problems, and implementation of arms control measures. Short of a miracle, in all areas of force structure, sustainability, modernization, and R&D—with the exception of backfitting of older units with technological enhancements in areas such as submarine quieting—the Navy will be sorely lacking. Thus there is no bridge between current naval strategy and any more ambitious declaratory policy with global pretensions in the Russian case. Naval capabilities will limit the Russian Navy to strategic deterrence, the protection of the deterrent force, essential defense of air and sea access to the Russian littoral, and SLOC protection of trade routes in the Baltic and Black Seas. Russia may remain a global player by providing a minor and symbolic contribution to UN or other combined force ventures, but, contrary to Aleksei Arbatov's assertion at the outset of this paper, the Navy will not become more important relative to the other services in the future—except perhaps in terms of national prestige associated with the lion's share of the Russian nuclear arsenal at sea. His assertions of the Navy's utility in protecting worldwide Russian trade routes and creating leverage against neighboring nations that might attempt to intervene in former Asian Republics is and will remain wishful thinking for the foreseeable future.

One then must ask for what does the Russian Federation need a Navy? While the utility of the Russian Navy has already diminished to strategic deterrence and regional defense, it now and for the foreseeable future will leave her in a position of relative superiority in relation to other Eurasian navies. Considering her diminished economic situation and the fragility of her internal political situation, such a Navy will still retain significant importance. De facto, however, the United States Navy has—through Cold War victory—achieved command of the seas in a real Mahanian sense.

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## Chapter IV

### Endnotes

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## APPENDIX A

### TZARIST NAVIES IN RETROSPECT

Most historians credit Peter The Great (1682-1725) with the creation of the Russian Navy. Certainly, during his reign the

Russian Navy became more than merely an extension of the land armies. When he became ruler in 1689, as was so often the case, Russia was at war with Turkey. The Russian objective against the Turks was the Fortress of Azov, which was captured with a flotilla of about 200 ships that had been constructed and manned largely by foreign troops.<sup>1</sup> Azov was captured in 1696 only to be recovered by the Turks fifteen years later.<sup>2</sup> The utility of sea power in capturing Azov, and the inability to exploit it due to lack of the same, convinced Peter that Russia must become a naval power. To accomplish this goal, he set out in 1697 to visit European cities—especially English and Dutch ports—to learn as much as he could from the West, particularly in areas of shipbuilding, seamanship and navigation.<sup>3</sup> Having recruited many foreigners into Russian service, Peter built a modern Baltic Fleet of 48 major warships and 787 auxiliary craft. This force defeated the Swedish Navy in the battle of Hango in 1714.<sup>4</sup> So impressive had the Russian Navy become, with vessels comparable to the best British ships, that in 1719 Britain recalled her men from the Russian service.<sup>5</sup>

Peter's overriding objective while Tzar was to modernize Russia and, in the process, to make her the technological and cultural equal of other European nations that had long since thrown off their feudal vestiges. The Navy, then, was not only a means of consolidating the empire, but an avenue toward increased Russian interaction with a Europe that was still considered vastly superior in technology and economic development.

During the rule of the next six Tzars and Tzarinas (1725-1762) Russian naval power went into a period of decline and a land orientation and focus again prevailed. "By the time of the Seven Years' War (1756-1763), Russia had fewer than 18 ships of the line—fewer, in fact, than at the beginning of the century."<sup>6</sup> The main Russian naval activity during this period was exploration of the Far East. The poor quality of Russian leadership and the resultant lack of foresight and constancy of policy during this period contributed in large part to an inability to maintain Peter's naval focus.

Born a German Princess, Catherine II (The Great)(1762-1796) quite expectedly had a Eurocentric focus. Much like Peter the Great, she was intent on the modernization of Russia on the Western model. Realizing that Russia could not remain merely a Continental power, she renewed the historic quest to gain access to the Mediterranean by assaulting Constantinople by sea. To wrest Constantinople from Turkey required sea power.

The breakup of the Ottoman Empire and incorporation of the northern part of it and neighboring territory was one of Catherine's chief aims. She could attempt it under the guise of championing the cause of Christendom—but only with requisite naval strength.<sup>7</sup> To consolidate her gains at the expense of the Ottoman Empire Catherine established a Black Sea Fleet and ordered a naval base to be constructed at Sevastopol.<sup>8</sup> Her successor, Paul I, continued to use naval power, but without expansion of the Navy. During this entire period Sweden and the Ottoman Empire remained the major naval antagonists. Thus the pattern of quest for empire, desire for modernization along Western lines, messianic complex—and resulting requirement for naval strength—had again established itself in Russian history.

Alexander I (1801-1825), while continuing the historic trend by expanding the Russian state, was compelled by events on the Continent to adopt a strong military posture. Wars with Turkey, Sweden and particularly Napoleonic France made military, including naval, investment important.<sup>9</sup> Many credit Napoleon's ill-fated march to Moscow in 1812 with French inability to compel Russia to comply with the Continental System, which was instituted to isolate Britain economically. Surely Napoleon's lack of requisite naval power to compel his will on the British and his vulnerability to sea power even when possessing dominant land armies were factors in intensifying Alexander's naval focus. So also was his intense interest in international—and particularly European—affairs.

Though Russia surrendered the bulk of her fleet to the British while not yet in a state war rather than risk a preemptive strike in 1808,<sup>10</sup> coastal operations of limited scope in the Baltic and exploration in the Pacific including Alaska, and even resulting in the discovery of the Antarctic, continued during Alexander's reign. With the exception of the period immediately after the Treaty of Tilsit between Alexander and Napoleon, Russian naval spending reflected the utility of these forces during the entire Napoleonic period. With

that threat gone after the Vienna settlement, weariness caused by the ravages of the war of coalition against Napoleon, acceptance of Russia on equal terms with the other great powers of Europe in the Congress of Vienna system, and a period of breathing space before liberalism and nationalism were to change the political equation on the Continent combined to allow cooperation between the major powers which did not rely heavily on the use of military force. Thus the Russian Navy again entered a period of decline.

Tzar Nicholas I (1825-1855) found utility in the Russian Navy in wars against the Turks—for a time in 1827 and 1828 while allied with France and England—in the first 15 years of his reign.<sup>11</sup> While he had a strong Navy through the 1830s, with over half the strength of the British Navy in terms of ships of the line, the Navy had again declined by the 1840s,<sup>12</sup> though the Russian Baltic Fleet was still viewed as a menace by the British. A fundamental shift in the Continental balance of power, however, was becoming evident by the end of that decade. While the Congress system had worked effectively in enabling the great powers of Europe to settle disagreements on the Continent, and indeed cooperate in their settlement in their own best interest, clashes were increasingly taking place where interests converged on the European periphery. Additionally, the liberal uprisings of 1848 had alerted the Monarchs of Europe that their absolute hold on power was now tenuous at best. The ability to mobilize popular sentiment by focusing attention on external threats and utility of the military in putting down domestic liberalism and nationalistic fervor once again forebode an era of increased violence.

Nicholas I's primary focus throughout his reign—but particularly toward the latter part of it—was the maintenance of equilibrium in Russia as well as on the Continent. This equilibrium was seriously shaken by the Crimean War of 1854-1855. British and French determination to prevent Russia from gaining control of the eastern Mediterranean and their resolve to keep Turkey as the guardian of the Bosphorus was the root cause of the war.<sup>13</sup> Though the Russian Navy had acquitted itself nicely in the Black Sea against the Turks in 1853 in their victory at Sinope where they used the new technology of exploding shells for the first time,<sup>14</sup> the fleet was no match for the British and French the next year. The primary allied goal was the capture of the Crimean naval base at Sevastopol, which the Russians finally abandoned on 11 September 1855, but only after sinking major portions of the fleet to block the harbor at the outset and scuttling the remaining ships on their departure.<sup>15</sup> While the Russian defeat

was precipitated by a Austro-Hungarian threat of intervention, it none-the-less signaled the start of a protracted period of inward focus and introspection for the Russian state. As with previous periods in Russian history, with the lack of an immediate threat and a reduced international focus, Russian navalism declined concomitantly.

This decline, which took place during the initial stages of Alexander II's reign (1855-1881), was mostly the result of losses of naval assets in the Black Sea during the war and compelled Russian acceptance of a prohibition on maintaining a fleet in the Black Sea in the Treaty of Paris of 30 March 1856.<sup>16</sup> During this period, however, a "peredishka" or breathing space/respite of sorts took place. The Russian Navy remained strong in the Baltic and a coherent strategy for use of the fleet in commerce raiding emerged as a prime instrument of Tzarist policy.<sup>17</sup> Also, modernization of the Navy along western lines with steam, armor and (later) breech-loading guns was accomplished. None the less, until Russia abrogated the Treaty of Paris in 1870 (while the French guarantor was tied down in the Franco-Prussian War) and renewed her desires for naval strength in the Black Sea and access to the Mediterranean, she remained significantly inferior as a naval power to Britain and France. Aside from a renewed focus on exploration in the Pacific, Russia's interest was mainly in coastal protection and commerce raiding. In fact, the sale of Alaska to the United States in 1867 was in part an attempt to court what was seen as a natural ally as well as to encircle British Canada by the U.S. by divesting an area which was unprofitable and indefensible from British attack.<sup>19</sup> Oddly enough, the sale was viewed as a means of countering British sea power.

The Crimean War came at a time, perhaps, which was as good from the Russian perspective as it could have been in a naval sense. By 1860 wooden ships had already begun to be replaced by much more capable armored steamships. Thus the losses incurred would have soon been obviated by obsolescence anyway. In any case, when the Russians again went to war with Turkey in what has become known as the "Torpedo War" (due to the first use of true naval torpedoes) of 1876-1878 they found that, even in victory that for the most part was won on land, their naval inferiority to the British prevented them from gaining what they thought were rightful territorial gains.<sup>19</sup> This precipitated the first detailed and systematic plan for a wholesale increase in the Russian Navy in 1882.

Alexander III (1881-1894), who had ascended to the throne on his father's assassination the previous year, continued the focused naval programs and increased naval funding started by his father. Though there was now an interest in developing a pure Russian naval technological base so as not to be reliant on outside constraints which could be imposed on requisite naval power, Russian shipbuilding design continued to lag as much as twenty years behind the leading maritime nations and she was largely dependent on the West for naval modernization. Thus her goal of countering British seapower was to large extent unobtainable.

By 1897 Russia had fourteen total battleships giving her a ratio of 2 : 2.16 : 5.12 as compared to the French and British.<sup>21</sup> As Tzar Nicholas II (1894-1917) was soon to learn, this growing and impressive indicator of relative naval power was in reality tremendously misleading. In 1904 the Japanese, seeking to turn attention from internal problems, attacked the Russians at Port Arthur which had been captured by the Japanese during the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895, turned back to the Chinese on demand of the European powers including Russia, and later occupied by Russia in 1898.<sup>21</sup> The surprise attack nearly decimated the Russian First Pacific Squadron at that port, in response to which Nicholas hastily assembled a "Second Pacific Squadron" in the Baltic for its relief. Many of the more than 100 ships in this Squadron were top heavy, hopelessly outdated, and two of the battleships and two armored cruisers had been returned from the Pacific in 1901 as unfit for active duty.<sup>22</sup> Crewed mostly by recently conscripted peasants and with few experienced or professional Officers, the Squadron set out under the command of the only Admiral who had not actively avoided taking command on an 18,000 mile voyage which would require over 500,000 tons of coal to relieve Port Arthur after only seven fruitless weeks of training.<sup>23</sup> Over seven months later this Russian fleet engaged and was destroyed by the Japanese Fleet at the Battle of Tsushima.

Once again the Russian military entered a period of regrouping which relied heavily on foreign technology. Once again the timing of this huge naval defeat was fortuitous in that, with the advent of the British Dreadnought class of battleship in 1906 virtually all naval construction of earlier design was rendered obsolete. This theoretically put all maritime power nations on an equal footing in terms of naval construction.

The Russo-Japanese War is particularly instructive in that it demonstrated three lessons unique to the Russian experience: (1) ships were not designed to meet conditions under which they would operate; design (particularly foreign design) ignored the "requirements unique to Russia, stemming from her unique geographic location," (2) a need existed for inter-theater maneuver of forces, which required ships of greater cruising range and endurance to compensate for a lack of bases, and (3) strategic foresight was necessary to concentrate forces.<sup>24</sup>

Though the Russian Navy began a Dreadnought building program by 1909 and an effort was made to rebuild the fleet, operations during World War I were confined to minelaying and patrol in the Black Sea and Baltic and were inconsequential to the Russian fate in that war.

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13. Mitchell, *Op. Cit.*, P. 39.
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15. Riasanovsky, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 338-339.
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## APPENDIX B

### THE INFLUENCE OF COMMUNISM ON THE RUSSIAN NAVY

The Russian perception of history has without question been modified by Communism. In the Soviet system reality was understood officially as that which was planned by the supreme authority—with no room for that which could be viewed as negative<sup>1</sup>—and all that was planned by the supreme authority had its basis in Communist ideology. Thus, since the fall of the Tzarist state the utility of the military has been viewed within the greater context of class warfare. Concomitantly, the role of navies has been tied to their utility in controlling the means of production—primarily by seizing control of the sources of raw material<sup>2</sup> or their means of transportation. This is a logical extension of Marxist-Leninist ideology. Paradoxically, however, naval strategy since 1917 has taken on a strategically defensive but tactically offensive character during the Soviet period. In that military forces have an importance politically equal to their value in warfighting unique in Communist ideology, it is important to remember that “Navies can be used to convey signals. In fact the chief function of a navy, or any military for that matter, is not to fight, but to convey signals that are so clear that battle becomes unnecessary.”<sup>3</sup> This holds particularly true for the Soviet Navy. Since the current Russian leadership was raised in the Communist system, the degree to which they will be able to divest themselves of old conceptualizations of the symbolic utility of the Navy may to some extent account for actions and programs which appear irrational from the Western perspective.

A review of Soviet navalism, while revealing, is beyond the scope of this paper. This is so in part because the Soviet period can be seen as an aberration in Russian history. Establishing trends over a 74-odd year period is less important here than analyzing peculiarities in the approach to constitution and utilization of the Russian Navy emanating from it that may carry over into the decision process in the future.

For most observers, the [Russian remnant of the] Soviet Navy is an enigma. If the Soviets plan[ned] world domination, where [were] the amphibious ships? If the Soviets intend[ed] to control the seas, where [were] the airplanes? What [was] the need for so much firepower on such small ships and why [were] there so many submarines?<sup>4</sup>

Such irrationality in mating a Navy to an ideology of world domination through a defensive strategy based on a "Blue Belt of Defense"<sup>5</sup> transcends comprehension—if, truly, the Navy was a fundamental part of overall Soviet strategy. If, on the other hand, the Red Banner Navy was primarily a symbol of the power of the Soviet state and of the technological capability (however implausible) of the Proletariat, then its composition and role primarily in defense of approaches to the Soviet Motherland and nuclear forces at sea (as an extension of land forces) becomes more logical. One could even argue that the type of Navy developed during the Soviet period reflects the more rational approach of a competitive power. In any case, Robert Waring Herrick is undoubtedly correct when he notes that the reasons for the type of Soviet fleet that emerged in the post-World War II era were deterrence and prestige.<sup>6</sup>

Other aspects of Soviet behavior are equally unusual and interesting. First, naval doctrine was fundamentally offensive. In his book, *Soviet Military Strategy*, V.D. Sokolovskiy writes in his section on naval forces that:

The main task of naval forces in a general nuclear war is to obtain superiority on the seas in coordination with the strategic offensive forces and tactical aviation by delivering nuclear strikes against nuclear-rocket means, ships and aircraft at naval bases and at sea, and also other enemy military and industrial objectives. A significant part of the naval forces can also be used in limited wars.<sup>7</sup>

The first strategic principle for the Soviet Union and main law of war was to attack first with a surprise and devastating blow.<sup>8</sup> It is also noted that "Military strategy is subordinate to military doctrine, and both reflect the military aspirations of the Communist Party."<sup>9</sup> Thus both the structure and operating patterns of the Soviet Navy—and its Russian successor—have significant policy implications. To analyze the Navy only in terms of weapons and capabilities, ignoring its international role, is to overlook one of its primary missions.<sup>10</sup> Another observer notes that Soviet naval doctrine has undergone changes relating to both international and domestic political factors. He sees these changes as emanating from two main sources: (1) reaction to and conformation with Soviet perceptions of U.S. and other Western naval doctrines; and, (2) interest group pressure emanating mainly from the Soviet Navy.<sup>11</sup>



Further, Soviet military doctrine can be viewed as based on a system of beliefs on how strategies will be executed and wars will be fought which include the following:

1. The nature of future war. Will it be nuclear or non-nuclear? General or local? Long or short? Conducted on the sea or on the land?

2. The effect of the nuclear revolution. Does the existence of nuclear weapons make traditional military doctrine outmoded? Does it make traditional troops outmoded? Does it make war a rational instrument of foreign policy?

3. The preconditions and conditions for victory in a future war. Should there be vast stockpiles of nuclear weapons? Mass armies and navies? Overseas bases? Are the initial blows in war decisive? Which branch of the service should be dominant in a future war? Should all branches of the service be used in a future war?<sup>12</sup>

The answers to these questions by the Soviet leadership can to large extent be seen in their views on warfare and the utility of the Navy as outlined above.

Another peculiarity of the Soviet system was the propensity for open but limited debate on defense matters prior to the formulation of an official Party position (after which debate was closed). When coupled with discussion of concepts and hardware well before they were actually put in place, one gets the impression that, in the Soviet military, concepts were treated as reality. Also, the Soviet practice was to attempt to find a solution to the kind of naval threat posed by the United States and then make it clear to us that a solution had been reached.<sup>13</sup>

As mentioned above in Appendix A and frequently in writings by Admiral of the Fleet Gorshkov, the lack of basing for overseas naval operations was highlighted by the Russo-Japanese war. To a great extent the Soviet Navy was structured to compensate for this major shortcoming as well as to ameliorate the effects of cold weather operations due to lack of warm water ports. The Russian Navy today has inherited these shortcomings. With access to only Cuban basing, Angolan facilities and those now abandoned at Cam Ranh Bay throughout most of the Soviet period, a concept developed where naval readiness was considered highest when ships were in port and

had ready access to maintenance facilities and spare parts and distant operations were supported logistically at sea. The Russian Navy today has inherited these constraints, and, when coupled with a lack of operating funds, readiness of units as calculated in the West suffers accordingly.

In summary, the influence of Communism on the Russian Navy has been in large part negative. It has led to strategy, doctrine and force structure to support a paranoia exacerbated by ignorance of the outside world and linked to an outdated nineteenth century ideology and the perpetuation of an irrationally imposed perception of threat.

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## Appendix B

### Endnotes

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